



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: For the December 16, 2019 Commission Meeting

TO: Members, Wisconsin Elections Commission

FROM: Meagan Wolfe
Administrator, Wisconsin Elections Commission

Prepared and Presented by:
Diane Lowe
Lead Election Specialist

SUBJECT: Ballot Access for the May 12, 2020 Congressional District 7 Special Election

This memorandum presents a summary of important and noteworthy information about candidates requesting ballot access for the 2020 Special Election for the office of Representative in Congress, District 7.

Summary

The nomination paper filing deadline for the Special Election for the office of Representative in Congress, District 7 was 5:00 p.m., on Monday, December 2, 2019. The governor originally ordered the special election to be held on January 27, 2020, with the nomination paper circulation period beginning on September 23, 2019, the date of the order. The order was subsequently amended to set the special election date for May 12, 2020. Because candidates had begun circulating papers according to the original order, the amended order retained September 23, 2019 as the first date to circulate nomination papers. The minimum number of signatures required on nomination papers for a congressional candidate is 1,000.

Nine candidates filed Declarations of Candidacy for the Special Election: Three representing the Democratic Party, three representing the Republican Party, one representing the Constitution Party and two candidates identifying as independent.

Three candidates, one Democrat and two Independent, failed to file nomination papers with the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

Six candidates, two Democratic candidates, three Republican candidates and one Constitution candidate, timely filed nomination papers. Of the six sets filed, one Republican and one Constitution candidate knowingly filed papers 200-400 signatures short of the minimum required. These papers were received, but not reviewed.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

Dean Knudson, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thomsen

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

The remaining four sets of nomination papers were found to be sufficient, and staff noted only one irregularity: One candidate listed the date of the special primary as the election date. Following the precedent set by the former Elections Board and Government Accountability Board, staff accepted this anomaly as substantially compliant.

No challenges to nomination papers were filed for by the deadline of 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 5, 2019.

The two Democratic candidates and two Republican candidates whose nomination papers and Declarations of Candidacy were timely filed and sufficient will participate in a primary to be conducted in conjunction with the spring primary on February 18, 2020. The winner of each party's primary will appear on the Special Election ballot on May 12, 2020.

Candidates Recommended for Denial of Ballot Status

Staff recommends the Commission deny ballot access for Democratic candidate Spencer Zimmerman and independent candidates Dennis Paulaha and Robert Gary Schuck who failed to file nomination papers; and for Republican candidate Michael Opela and Constitution candidate Douglas Lindee whose nomination papers were filed but insufficient.

Candidates Recommended for Approval of Ballot Status

Staff recommends the Commission certify ballot access for Democratic candidates Lawrence Dale and Tricia Zunker and Republican candidates Tom Tiffany and Jason Church. These candidates appear as "approved" on the Candidate Tracking report that accompanies this memorandum.

Recommended Motion:

The Commission certifies ballot access for the four candidates listed as "approved" on the Candidate Tracking Report.

Attachment: Candidate Tracking by Office Report